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LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SAIGON 181

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SUBJ: BIO: PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES: TRUONG DINH DZU-
TRAN VAN CHIEU

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REF: A) SAIGON 76 B) SAIGON 154

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1. THUONG DINH DZU IS A MIDDLE-AGED, PROSPEROUS, CENTRAL BUDDHIST, SAIGON LAWYER AND TRAN VAN CHIEU IS A PROSPEROUS, SOUTHERN, CAO DAI, SAIGON BUSINESSMAN. BOTH ARE LEADERS OF, SUPPORTED BY, THE UNITED NATIONALIST FRONT.

2. DZU WAS BORN IN 1917 IN QUI NHON, BINH DINH PROVINCE, SOUTH CENTRAL VIET-NAM. AFTER LYCEE HE ATTENDED THE UNIVERSITY OF HANOI AND RECEIVED A LAW DEGREE, AND WAS ADMITTED TO THE BAR IN 1941. HE PRACTICED IN SA DOC PROVINCE UNTIL 1947 WHEN HE MOVED TO SAIGON. HE WAS VERY SUCCESSFUL AND HAD WELL-KNOWN CLIENTS, INCLUDING LARGE FRENCH FIRMS AND THE NGO DINH NHU FAMILY. HE IS SAID TO HAVE ADVISED NME. NHU ON THE RESTRICTIVE FAMILY LAW OF 1959; HER BROTHER TRAN VAN KHIEM WAS HIS LAW PARTNER.

3. DZU SERVED AS PRESIDENT OF THE ROTARY CLUB OF SAIGON 1960-61. HE CONSIDERED RUNNING FOR PRESIDENT AGAINST NGO DINH DIEM IN 1961 BUT DISCARDED THE IDEA; IN 1961-62 HE WAS GOVERNOR OF DISTRICT 330, INTERNATIONAL ROTARY. IN MARCH 1963 HE WAS ARRESTED AND HELD ON A BAD CHECK CHARGE, POSSIBLY FOR POLITICAL REASONS; HE WAS SOON RELEASED BUT THE PRESS ANNOUNCED THE BAR ASSOCIATION HAD DISBARRED HIM FOR SIX MONTHS, AND HIS PROPERTY HAD BEEN CONFISCATED.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR

REVIEWED BY Ivan Izenberg DATE 10/5/81

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IS AUTH.

REASON(S)

FINDERSE EXISTING MARKINGS ☐DECLASSIFIED ☐ RELEASABLE ☒RELEASE DENIED ☐

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4. IN 1966 AND EARLY 1967 DZU WAS ACCUSED BY THE GOVERNMENT DELEGATE TO THE SPECIAL MILITARY COURT OF HAVING EXTORTED BRIBES FROM TWO AMERICAN PRISONERS. DZU REPLIED THAT HE HAD MERELY CHARGED HIGH FEES, WHICH HAD NOT YET BEEN PAID. THE GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCED AN INVESTIGATION OF THE CHARGES, BUT NO RESULTS HAVE BEEN PUBLICLY ANNOUNCED.

5. TRAN VAN CHIEU WAS BORN IN BEIN HOA IN 1919, AND AN OFFICIAL BIOGRAPHY OF HIM STATES HE WAS "POOR AND ORPHANED AT 10 YEARS OF AGE." HE ATTENDED PETRUS KY SECONDARY SCHOOL AND GRADUATED IN 1939; HE THEN WENT TO HANOI UNIVERSITY BUT SOON RETURNED HOME BECAUSE OF THE WAR, AND WORKED IN THE DIRECTORATE OF TAXATION, HEADING THE DIRECT TAXATION SERVICE FROM 1941 TO 1945. WHEN THE FRENCH RETURNED TO SAIGON IN SEPTEMBER 1945 HE JOINED RESISTANCE GROUPS IN THE TAN UYEN AREA BUT RETURNED TO SAIGON IN 1946 WHEN HIS GROUP WAS ATTACKED BY COMMUNIST UNITS. HE THEN WENT INTO BUSINESS, DEVELOPING A SMALL MOTORCYCLE AND CAR PARTS RETAIL SHOP INTO A LARGE IMPORT FIRM INCLUDING HIS OWN RUBBER PLANTATION. HE HAS ALSO BECOME ASSOCIATED WITH FOREMOST

DAIRIES. IN MARCH 1957 CHIEU WAS ELECTED FIRST VIETNAMESE PRESIDENT OF THE SAIGON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, A POSITION HE HELD FOR SOME TIME.

6. IN EARLY 1966 CHIEU WAS NAMED SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE NATIONALIST UNIFIED FORCE, A GROUP OF CAO DIZ, HOA HAO, DAI VIETS, AND VIETNAMESE NATIONALIST PARTY ELEMENTS WHICH SOON JOINED WITH OTHER SMALL POLITICAL GROUPS TO FORM THE NATIONALIST UNITED FRONT. CHIEU IS SAID TO BE THE DRIVING FORCE BEHIND THE FRONT, AND BOTH HE AND DZU ARE ON ITS PRESIDIUM. IN SEPTEMBER 1966 THE NUF SUPPORTED THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS BUT DID NOT PRESENT CANDIDATES. RUNKER
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